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Natural Resource

At the Baldy Center, law is only the beginning of vital research

“**T**his University and this Law School have defined their niche in higher education as promoting interdisciplinary research,” says Barry L. Boyer, associate dean of the law school and director of the Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy.

Now, for the 1990s, the Baldy Center has rethought its role to take full advantage of its strengths.

“We do programs on law and social policy, but we’ve helped support some research and work that is purely psychological — you wouldn’t find it in law journals. The individual components may not have a legal flavor, but they feed into things that the legal faculty and students are doing,” says Boyer.

Since its inception two decades ago with a major bequest from Buffalo attorney Christopher Baldy, the Baldy Center has fostered the kind of legal and social policy research that gets people talking. A 1990 conference on “Buffalo: Change and Community,” for example, drew hundreds of attendees from Western New York and elsewhere, and a special issue of the *Buffalo Law Review* was devoted to the topic.

Other research supported by the Baldy Center reflects the wide-ranging interests of the UB faculty involved. Topics run the gamut from child witnesses in court, to nuclear war prevention, to implementation of

the new Americans With Disabilities Act, to homelessness and housing discrimination, to ethnic violence in Sri Lanka, to the industrial heritage of the steel, railroad and grain milling industries in Western New York and surrounding areas.

The Center’s redefinition of itself, Boyer explains, is one of organization rather than focus. In its early years, the Center awarded competitive grants to faculty with research proposals. It became apparent, however, that this arrangement did not encourage cooperative efforts between departments, and thus was not fulfilling the goal of fostering multidisciplinary approaches to research.

In the late 1970s, the Center began to focus on sponsoring joint degree programs — largely through the Public Law Program, which

enabled students to earn both the J.D. and a Ph.D. in policy studies. This met with some success. But a number of factors, including the School of Management’s withdrawal from the effort, undermined the program’s effectiveness. Clearly, a new

approach was needed.

That new approach has been in place for about three years now, Boyer says. It features a new structure that re-emphasizes research, funding individual and group projects by faculty and students through special-focus Working Groups and Baldy Programs.

An interdisciplinary advisory committee oversees the funding of

these programs; though the Baldy Center is a separate administrative structure, its director reports to the dean of the Law School.

Since its inception two decades ago with a major bequest from Buffalo attorney Christopher Baldy, the Baldy Center has fostered the kind of legal and social policy research that gets people talking.

"The permanence and track record of these groups is what will carry weight in the academic world," Boyer says.

Groups seeking Baldy Center funding for a short-term project may request recognition as a Working Group. If the proposed project is one that will become an ongoing program, the group may seek the status of Baldy Program.

The Center now supports these ongoing Baldy Programs: Children and Law; Community and Difference; Gender, Law, and Social Policy; and Human Rights Law and Policy. Within these programs are a number of Working Groups addressing specific aspects of the "parent" topics. For example, in the Community and Difference Program, the Fair Housing and Homelessness Working Group has undertaken such projects as a study of racial segregation in Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority projects, and a series of interviews with homeless adults in the Buffalo area on issues of concern to them.

The list of these Working Groups is a lengthy one, tribute to the creative intellectual ferment that the Baldy Center is able to support. "It has become a way to leverage additional resources from inside and outside the university," Boyer says.

A continuing goal, he says, is to enhance the visibility and reputation of the Baldy programs and working groups. One component of that, he says, is the journal *Law & Policy*, published out of the Baldy Center. (See an article on UB Law's two interdisciplinary journals elsewhere in this issue of UB Law Forum.)

He says the Center's reputation is getting around: "We're becoming a broker for all these groups to spread the word among their peers." ■

Jessup Team Competes in World Cup Competition

UB Law School's four-member student international law team was one of only 20 nationally who earned the right to compete in the prestigious Jessup World Cup Competition recently in Washington, D.C.

Student teams from 50 countries argued a hypothetical case based partly on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. A team from France won the contest.

The nine-day event is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Society of International Law. Team members were Peter Grubea, Daniel DeRosso, Thomas Cannaro and Henry Nowak. Frank Housch was student coach.

The Competition is named for the late Philip Jessup, former law professor at Columbia University and eminent justice of the International Court of Justice, which is located in The Hague, in the Netherlands.

UB Law Professor Virginia Leary is vice president of the organization and faculty adviser to the UB student international law team. According to Leary, the teams argued before judges from around the world, including the International Court of Justice.

"International law cases, such as the one selected for this competition, are not criminal law cases but are based on the principles of international law," she explains.

Nations found legally responsible by the international law court judges are obviously not incarcerated. By being held responsible of wrongdoing, however, countries may be punished by use of economic and other sanctions.

"The term *responsible* is used rather than *guilty* as would be true in criminal lawsuits," she explains.

Forty UB Law students competed for the four spots on UB's Regional Jessup team, which then participated in the Northern Mid- Western Regional Competition. Their high score in the regional earned them the opportunity to represent UB in the international Jessup Cup Competition.

"It is an honor for our team to have earned the right to compete in this event," Leary emphasizes.

Funding for the team's trip comes partially from monies from the Law School in addition to Ford Foundation grants which have been awarded in the field of international law to UB faculty members Leary, Lucinda Finley, George Kannar and political science professor Claude Welch during the past three years. Ford Foundation support has totaled \$250,000 over this time to support a variety of international law programs and projects at UB Law. ■